

REMARKS

The Examiner's comments from the Office Action mailed April 16, 2008 have been carefully considered. Claims 3-5, 8, 9, and 17 have been canceled without prejudice or disclaimer. The features of these claims have been incorporated into claims 1 and 13. Additional amendments also have been made to claims 1 and 13. Support for the amendments can be found throughout the specification and figures. No new matter has been added.

Reexamination and allowance of the pending claims are respectfully requested.

Claim Rejections

Claims 1-3, 8, 10, and 12 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 6,166,894 to Kane (hereinafter "Kane") in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,844,785 to Daoud et al. (hereinafter "Daoud"). Claims 3 and 8 have been canceled without prejudice or disclaimer, thereby rendering the rejection with respect to these claims moot. With respect to claims 1, 2, 10, and 12, Applicants respectfully traverse the rejection.

Claim 1 recites, in part, a printed circuit board defining ground contact pads on opposite sides of the printed circuit board at the top of the printed circuit board. A lower region of the printed circuit board defines cutouts that form plug-in regions corresponding to at least three adjacent surge arresters arranged on the printed circuit board in a single row.

The combination of Kane and Daoud fails to disclose or suggest the printed circuit board as recited in claim 1. Neither Kane nor Daoud discloses or suggests a printed circuit board defining ground contact pads on opposite sides of the printed circuit board at the top of the printed circuit board that mate to at least one ground contact in the form of a forked contact. Further, neither Kane nor Daoud discloses or suggests at least three adjacent surge arresters arranged on a printed circuit board in a single row. Rather, Kane discloses surge arresters arranged in two rows such that adjacent surge arresters are arranged in opposite rows. Moreover, the references do not disclose or suggest an integral housing that is open at the top and covered by an insulator strip and provided with a slot on at least one of end sides of the housing by means of which the insulator strip is configured to be levered out using a tool.

No reason is provided in Daoud or elsewhere to modify Kane to define ground contact pads on opposite sides of the printed circuit board at the top of the printed circuit board that mate to at least one ground contact in the form of a forked contact. Furthermore, no reason is provided in Daoud or elsewhere to modify Kane to arrange adjacent surge arresters in a single row on the printed circuit board. Moreover, no reason is provided to modify Kane to include an integral housing that is open at the top and covered by an insulator strip and provided with a slot on at least one of end sides of the housing by means of which the insulator strip is configured to be levered out using a tool.

For at least these reasons, Kane would not lead a person skilled in the art to the invention of claim 1, even in view of Daoud. Claims 2, 10, and 12 depend from claim 1 and are allowable for at least the same reasons. Withdrawal of the rejection and allowance of claims 1, 2, 10, and 12 are respectfully requested. Applicants do not otherwise concede the correctness of the rejection and reserve the right to make additional arguments if necessary.

Claims 4 and 5 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Kane in view of Daoud as applied to claim 1 above, and further in view of EP 0410140 to Thalhammer (hereinafter "Thalhammer"). Claims 4 and 5 have been canceled without prejudice or disclaimer, thereby rendering the rejection with respect to these claims moot.

Claims 6 and 7 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Kane in view of Daoud and Thalhammer as applied to claim 4 above, and further in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,755,026 to Stephan et al. (hereinafter "Stephan"). Applicants respectfully traverse the rejection.

Claims 6 and 7 depend from claim 4 and are allowable over Kane, Daoud, and Thalhammer for at least the same reasons as discussed above with respect to claim 4. Stephan does not overcome the shortcomings of Kane, Daoud, and Thalhammer. Stephan also does not disclose or suggest a printed circuit board defining ground contact pads on opposite sides of the printed circuit board at the top of the printed circuit board that mate to at least one ground contact in the form of a forked contact. Further, Stephan does not disclose or suggest at least

three adjacent surge arresters arranged on a printed circuit board in a single row. Moreover, Stephan does not disclose or suggest an integral housing that is open at the top and covered by an insulator strip and provided with a slot on at least one of end sides of the housing by means of which the insulator strip is configured to be levered out using a tool.

For at least these reasons, Kane would not lead a person skilled in the art to the invention of claims 6 and 7, even in view of Daoud, Thalhammer, and Stephan. Withdrawal of the rejection and allowance of claims 6 and 7 are respectfully requested. Applicants do not otherwise concede the correctness of the rejection and reserve the right to make additional arguments if necessary.

Claim 9 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Kane in view of Daoud as applied to claim 1 above, and further in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,175,662 to DeBalko et al. (hereinafter “DeBalko”). Claim 9 has been canceled without prejudice or disclaimer, thereby rendering the rejection with respect to this claim moot.

Claim 11 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Kane in view of Daoud as applied to claim 1 above, and further in view of U.S. Patent No. 4,496,803 to Smith (hereinafter “Smith”). Applicants respectfully traverse the rejection.

Claim 11 depends from claim 1 and is allowable over Kane and Daoud for at least the same reasons as discussed above with respect to claim 1. Smith does not overcome the shortcomings of Kane and Daoud. Smith also does not disclose or suggest a printed circuit board defining ground contact pads on opposite sides of the printed circuit board at the top of the printed circuit board that mate to at least one ground contact in the form of a forked contact. Further, Smith does not disclose or suggest at least three adjacent surge arresters arranged on a printed circuit board in a single row. Moreover, Smith does not disclose or suggest an integral housing that is open at the top and covered by an insulator strip and provided with a slot on at least one of end sides of the housing by means of which the insulator strip is configured to be levered out using a tool.

For at least these reasons, Kane would not lead a person skilled in the art to the invention of claim 11, even in view of Daoud and Smith. Withdrawal of the rejection and allowance of claim 11 are respectfully requested. Applicants do not otherwise concede the correctness of the rejection and reserve the right to make additional arguments if necessary.

Claims 13, 14, and 16 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Kane in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,643,014 to Filus et al. (hereinafter “Filus”). Applicants respectfully traverse the rejection.

Claim 13 recites, in part, a first end of a printed circuit board forming separate plug-in regions. The second end of the printed circuit board defines a first ground contact pad at a first side and a second ground contact pad at an opposite, second side that mate to at least one ground contact in the form of a forked contact. Surge arresters are mounted to the printed circuit board in a single row at the second end of the printed circuit board. An integral housing defines a second side covered by an insulator strip, wherein inner sides of the housing are provided with supports for the insulator strip, wherein the housing is provided with a slot on at least one of end sides of the housing by means of which the insulator strip is configured to be levered out using a tool.

The combination of Kane and Filus fails to disclose or suggest a printed circuit board having the configuration recited in claim 13. Neither of these references discloses or suggests a printed circuit board having a first end forming separate plug-in regions and a second end defining a first ground contact pad at a first side and a second ground contact pad at an opposite, second side that mate to at least one ground contact in the form of a forked contact. Further, neither of these references discloses or suggests surge arresters mounted to the printed circuit board in a single row at the second end of the printed circuit board. Moreover, neither of these references discloses or suggests an integral housing defining a second side covered by an insulator strip, wherein inner sides of the housing are provided with supports for the insulator strip, and wherein the housing is provided with a slot on at least one of end sides of the housing by means of which the insulator strip is configured to be levered out using a tool. No reason is provided in the cited references or elsewhere to modify Kane or Filus to add these features.

For at least these reasons, Kane would not lead a person skilled in the art to the invention of claim 13, even in view of Filus. Claims 14 and 16 depend from claim 13 and are allowable for at least the same reasons. Withdrawal of the rejection and allowance of claims 13, 14, and 16 are respectfully requested. Applicants do not otherwise concede the correctness of the rejection and reserve the right to make additional arguments if necessary.

Claim 15 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Kane in view of Filus as applied to claim 13 above, and further in view of Smith. Applicants respectfully traverse the rejection.

Claim 15 depends from claim 13 and is allowable over Kane and Filus for at least the same reasons as discussed above with respect to claim 13. Smith does not overcome the shortcomings of Kane and Filus. Smith also does not disclose or suggest a printed circuit board having a first end forming separate plug-in regions and a second end defining a first ground contact pad at a first side and a second ground contact pad at an opposite, second side that mate to at least one ground contact in the form of a forked contact. Further, Smith does not disclose or suggest surge arresters mounted to the printed circuit board in a single row at the second end of the printed circuit board. Moreover, neither of these references discloses or suggests an integral housing defining a second side covered by an insulator strip, wherein inner sides of the housing are provided with supports for the insulator strip, and wherein the housing is provided with a slot on at least one of end sides of the housing by means of which the insulator strip is configured to be levered out using a tool.

For at least these reasons, Kane would not lead a person skilled in the art to the invention of claim 15, even in view of Filus and Smith. Withdrawal of the rejection and allowance of claim 15 are respectfully requested. Applicants do not otherwise concede the correctness of the rejection and reserve the right to make additional arguments if necessary.

Claim 17 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Kane in view of Filus as applied to claim 13 above, and further in view of Thalhammer. Claim 17 has been canceled without prejudice or disclaimer, thereby rendering the rejection with respect to this claim moot.

Claims 18-20 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Kane in view of Filus and Thalhammer as applied to claim 17 above, and further in view of Stephan. Applicants respectfully traverse the rejection.

Claims 18-20 depend from claim 17 and are allowable over Kane, Filus, and Thalhammer for at least the same reasons as discussed above with respect to claim 17. Stephan does not overcome the shortcomings of Kane, Filus, and Thalhammer. Stephan also does not disclose or suggest a printed circuit board having a first end forming separate plug-in regions and a second end defining a first ground contact pad at a first side and a second ground contact pad at an opposite, second side that mate to at least one ground contact in the form of a forked contact. Further, Stephan does not disclose or suggest surge arresters mounted to the printed circuit board in a single row at the second end of the printed circuit board. Moreover, neither of these references discloses or suggests an integral housing defining a second side covered by an insulator strip, wherein inner sides of the housing are provided with supports for the insulator strip, and wherein the housing is provided with a slot on at least one of end sides of the housing by means of which the insulator strip is configured to be levered out using a tool.

For at least these reasons, Kane would not lead a person skilled in the art to the invention of claims 18-20, even in view of Filus, Thalhammer, and Stephan. Withdrawal of the rejection and allowance of claims 18-20 are respectfully requested. Applicants do not otherwise concede the correctness of the rejection and reserve the right to make additional arguments if necessary.

Conclusion

In view of the above amendments and remarks, Applicants respectfully request a Notice of Allowance. If the Examiner believes a telephone conference would advance the prosecution of this application, the Examiner is invited to telephone the undersigned at the below-listed telephone number.



Respectfully submitted,

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